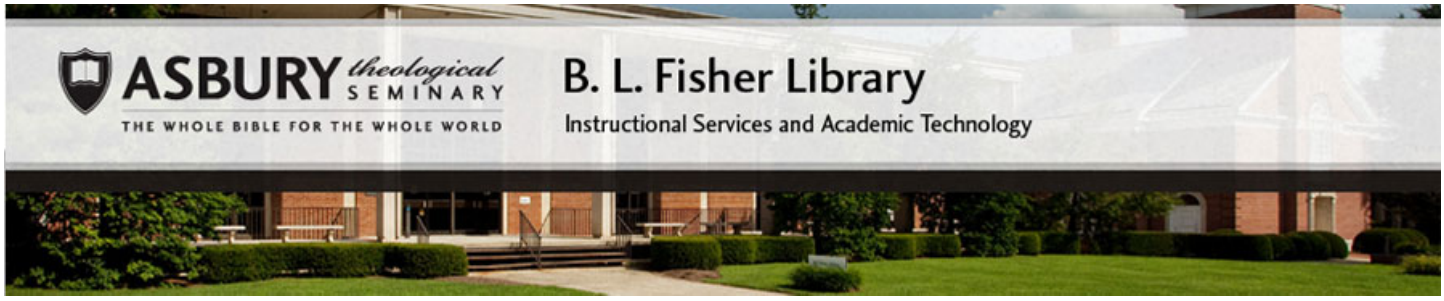

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PERSONALITY MATURITY IN THE MISSIONARY

A Thesis

Presented to

the Department of Christian Education

Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Religious Education

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by

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Lack of personality maturity has often caused tragic failure in individual, family, and national life. The need of maturation is the more acute in the case of the missionary facing a field of service calculated to present a variety of new problems. All other qualifications and preparations for effective service, such as good health, education, practical experience, and vital Christian experience, can be rendered ineffective by an immature personality.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study to consider psychological factors of personality maturity in the light of the qualifications for a successful missionary, as set forth by mission boards--to the end that the whole will shed light on missionary selection, preparation, and ministry.

Importance of the study. More than 1900 years ago Christ commissioned His disciples to go and teach all nations; yet approximately half of the world's population has never heard Christ's gospel. The situation is aggravated by the fact that forty-four percent of the people

of the world fifteen years of age and over, cannot read or write.[1] Moreover, only 7.7 percent of the world's population is Protestant.[2] A resurgence of the major world religions and atheistic ideologies plus a world-wide population expansion make the problem the more acute. For reasons such as these, Protestant missions were never more needed.

Missionaries are finding that these are days of challenge and opportunity. Swiftly changing world patterns demand an ever-increasing degree of flexibility in Christian workers. A world clamoring to read puts an increasing focus on the missionary as an educator. To meet the needs about him, the missionary must first have his own inner needs met. Missions demand maturity of manhood. The exigencies and otherwise wearing problems confronting the missionary require this elusive, yet vital, quality in a man's life. Immaturity spells failure in the mission field.

There must be a realistic understanding on the part of the missionary candidate, as well as the board, of the factors involved in personality maturity and their relation to effective service.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Personality. Personality is often defined with more than one

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[1]Student Volunteer Movement, "The Educational Missionary," Careers in the Christian Mission, Number 7 (New York: National Council of Churches, n. d.)

[2]Frank Wilson Price, "Ecumenical Streams in Protestant Christianity," Occasional Bulletin, XI (April 30, 1960), p. 15.

meaning.[3] Sometimes it is defined as that inner organization of self, or uniqueness of response that makes one an individual, distinct from others. Gordon Allport, in his extended study of personality, defines it thus, "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment."[4]

Man's personality is often defined in terms of his effect on others, or his social stimulus value, as Burnham speaks of it.[5] Although this view of personality is a popular one, it is limited to a social interpretation and situation and may imply that man has no personality apart from his relation to others. It is a most obvious aspect of personality but too limited for the purpose of this study.

Another definition sees personality as ". . . the pattern of motivation and of temperamental or emotional traits of the individual (in contrast to cognitive traits and ability).[6] This definition is in reference to the emotional responses of the individual. It too is one important aspect of personality rather than the sum total.

For the use of this paper, Allport's definition is the most

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[3]Horace B. English and Ava Champney English, A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms (New York: Longman's, Green and Company, 1958), p. 382.

[4]Gordon W. Allport, Personality: A Psychological Interpretation (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1937), p. 48.

[5]William H. Burnham, The Wholesome Personality (New York: Appleton-Century Company, 1932), p. 657.

[6]English and English, loc. cit.

comprehensive. It takes in the social and emotional aspects when it refers to an individual's ". . . unique adjustments to his environment."[7] Man's responses to his environment, inner and outer, in solitude and social situation, before himself, God, and man, determine what he is and what he appears to be. In its totality, it is his personality.

Maturity of personality. Maturity in the biological realm is rather neatly defined as a state of ripeness and full development, often empirically observable. In the psychological sense, maturity is not as easily determined. Part of the problem in defining maturity of personality relates to the primary law of individual differences. As already pointed out, a basic aspect of personality is uniqueness or individuality. To delineate the exact area of maturity is difficult and definition can be a rather subjective matter.[8]

Another reason why maturity is difficult to define lies in the fact that it is actually never fully or terminally achieved. As Louella Cole says, "Probably no one is wholly mature."[9] Maturity is really a process of growth. One may have certain areas of his life that are immature, and still other areas that reveal a well-adjusted adult pattern. Maturity is relative, possessed in greater and lesser degrees. Overstreet writes thus in point,

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[7]Allport, loc. cit.

[8]English and English, op. cit., p. 308.

[9]Louella Cole, Attaining Maturity (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1944), p. 14.

> A mature person is not one who has come to a certain level of achievement and stopped there. He is rather a maturing person--one whose linkages with life are constantly becoming stronger and richer because his attitudes are such as to encourage their growth rather than their stoppage.[10]

Psychologists deal more specifically with the marks of maturity than with definitions. Many and various elements of maturity can be listed, but there is general agreement as to what marks a mature personality. In broad outline, the mature person can be defined as one who views himself, others, and life in life's total context, and who responds to this reality in a healthful manner.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

Chapter II presents the need for personality maturity on the mission field. Its purpose is to show the major areas of stress that put great demand on personality. It seeks to make known needs as they affect the missionary, particularly in his capacity as educator, and as they affect the commissioning boards. Chapter III discusses the psychological criteria of personality maturity in the light of these needs. Two means to maturity, the home and the work of the Holy Spirit, are considered in particular. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the mature personality meeting the needs as they present themselves in a person's relation to himself, to others, and toward life in general. Chapter IV furnishes a concluding word of summary.

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[10]H. A. Overstreet, The Mature Mind (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1949), p. 43.

IV. METHODS AND MATERIALS USED

Research in written materials was the major source of information for this thesis. Books, periodicals, and pamphlets were widely used. Psychology books related to personality, especially material relevant to maturity, gave insight into the marks of maturity. Books on missionary problems and preparation laid the foundation for a knowledge of the demands of missions on the personality. Also helpful was the information sent by many mission boards relating to candidate qualifications.

CHAPTER II

THE NEED FOR PERSONALITY MATURITY ON THE MISSION FIELD

The work of the foreign missionary holds the possibility of a rich and satisfying life. Indeed, some have sought the missionary life because of the satisfactions it offers in the realm of social service alone. For others, missionary work has a romantic appeal akin to the spirit of adventure. Travel and life in a foreign country are attractive. Not a few are drawn to the missionary life because of the prestige of being a missionary.

A life of living for others is a psychologically sound basis for happiness. Romance and adventure, moreover, are to be found in missionary work. But when one has also the assurance of God's call to this type of service, he is on a sound basis spiritually and psychologically for building a completely satisfying life. Although the work of the missionary is worthwhile and rewarding, it has its exacting demands, its obstacles, its discouragements. One veteran missionary, in viewing his own life, remarked, "The missionary's job at its best, is the happiest in the world; at its worst it is like a blister on a thirty-mile walk."[1] This homely statement hints at the difficulties of the way. Because the life of the foreign missionary is most demanding, it is essential that the would-be missionary early face-up to the fact.

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[1]Ronald Owen Hall, The Missionary-Artist Looks at His Job (New York: International Missionary Council, 1946), p. 7.

I. THE NEED FOR PERSONALITY ADJUSTMENT GENERALLY

Life in a "missionary" environment demands new adjustments. There are, of course, the ordinary adjustments of life to be made: to joys and sorrows, social relationships, work-a-day situations, the restrictions and responsibilities of law and government, the disciplines of Christian living. But living in another land can be expected to add to and greatly intensify these problems of daily life. Strains on the personality that could be endured under the familiar circumstances of home may be beyond the endurance of the unprepared personality in the new situation. As one missionary said,

> The things I was prepared to meet have not materialized; but every weakness, and as I supposed, long conquered sins, temptations and trials innumerable, have set me behind and before, until I sometimes wonder whether I am the same person that left America a little time ago.[2]

Being commissioned as a missionary and taking a long trip to a new environment do not automatically equip one for service.

Many of the nervous habits and minor frustrations of daily life can be borne without undue strain as long as the familiar, comfortable environment of home is with us. But these same aggravations may take on alarming proportions when faced in an environment that is uncomfortable and strange, perhaps even hostile. Cook writes in point when he says,

> Excessive nervousness at home becomes greatly aggravated under the strains of missionary life. It may even become dangerous. And of course mental health and balance are, if anything, more necessary

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[2]Arthur Judson Brown, The Foreign Missionary (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1932), p. 182.

> for an effective ministry than bodily soundness. The mental and spiritual strains of missionary life are greater than the physical strains. They can scarcely be comprehended by one who has not actually served on the field and experienced them.[3]

The new missionary is entirely uprooted from all his former familiarities. The things that had affirmed his being and belonging are often largely replaced with different familiarities.[4] The former supports of his personality and way of life are removed and replaced with new experiences and problems. Leaving behind his friends and family, his home, familiar recreational or cultural opportunities and a favorable religious climate puts new strains on the personality. One's adaptive powers at times will be stretched to their limits. He may not have realized how heavily he leaned on his former "props" until they are utterly removed from him.

Removal of the old environment may present one set of problems to the neophyte in missions, but the problems presented by the new environment may create even greater difficulties. Usually a candidate considers the cost of leaving home as a basic prerequisite and can adjust to this. On the other hand, it is possible for him to be quite unaware of the strains the new environment may present. Harold Lindsell writes on the problem as follows:

> Not a few missionaries break down under the weight of nervous strain induced by climate, sanitary conditions, and environmental factors. We must remember that missionary life will do to people

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[3]Harold R. Cook, An Introduction to the Study of Christian Missions (Chicago: Moody Press, 1954), p. 105.

[4]Hall, op. cit., p. 55.

> what would never happen to them were they to remain at home. Normal civilian life in the United States, bad as it may be and in spite of the increasing number of mental breakdowns, does not begin to approximate the severity of conditions on the average field.[5]

Physical hardships experienced abroad can be really irritating. The glamour attached to roughing it can soon wear off. Isolation and its resulting loneliness can be devastating. Being assigned to a station in the "bush" where even missionary associates are few and far between will put exacting demands on one's resources. Isolation can be more than geographical. Even in a crowded city cultural, economic, religious, racial and lingual barriers can keep the missionary "alone." The most mature person can be severely tested at this point.

Another important area of testing to the missionary results from his being surrounded with a hostile religious climate. The nominal Christian society of America or Europe does not prepare one to meet the darkness of non-Christian cultures. Westerners are used to the concomitants of Christianity. They take for granted equality, justice, honesty, truthfulness, and morality. But these values cannot be expected in non-Christian cultures; and the results of their absence in daily living could take a person from initial shock to ultimate despair. As Stanley Soltau says, "The depression of heathenism is a very real thing and must be experienced to be realized."[6] St. Paul, who continually faced this in his own missionary endeavors, explained it in this way,

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[5]Harold Lindsell, Missionary Principles and Practice (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1955), p. 86.

[6]Stanley Soltau, Facing the Field (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1959), p. 88.

> For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
>
> Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Ephesians 6:12-13).

Inasmuch as these forces are likely to place extraordinary demands upon the Christian, only he who has achieved a good degree of maturity in personality and in religious experience is likely to survive.

Most missionary candidates will have given some serious consideration to the problems of leaving home and its comforts, to problems of physical hardship and isolation, but another need presses deeply: the missionary is expected to give up many things he has always considered his natural right. As never before, he must now see to it that his own wants and needs are secondary. He must truly deny himself. In a little volume for future missionaries, Mabel Williamson makes this thought-provoking statement,

> On the mission field it is not the enduring of the hardships, the lack of comforts and the roughness of the life that makes the missionary cringe and falter. It is something that will hit you right down where you live. The missionary has to give up having any rights. He has, in the words of Jesus, to 'deny himself.' He just has to give up himself.[7]

A basic principle in farming is that the grain must itself first die in order to reproduce. This is also an abiding spiritual principle (John 12:24). For the missionary its significance is heightened by the newer trends in missions. At one time the missionary was "boss." That stage has almost passed away. Now he is to regard himself as the

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[7]Mabel Williamson, Have We No Right (Chicago: Moody Press, 1957), p. 9.

national's co-worker. In fact, in today's world, with its goal of the "indigenous church," and the pressures of national and racial tensions, the missionary is often considered the helper or the "resource" of the national worker.[8] An immature demand on the part of a missionary for recognition of his rights could break an already tenuous relationship and seriously damage missionary work. After twenty-five years of missionary experience among the Koreans, Soltau writes, "The missionary is now in an advisory capacity only and lent to the national churches by the church in the homeland which he represents and by which he is supported."[9] Any feelings of superiority, any defensive attitude about status rights are easily detected in the sensitive spirit of nationalism now prevailing in countries abroad.

Related to the problem of a right personal relationship with nationals is the demand put upon today's missionary candidate by the present world situation. Flexibility should be a primary requisite in the modern missionary. Formerly, a missionary decided to invest his life in a particular land. That land and its people would become home to him, and he would find security in his life's work. Things were stable. But today this is less likely to be true. Fluidity describes the world situation. A relatively stable national situation one day may be in turmoil the next. Anti-western feelings are mounting as small nations demand recognition and independence. Hostility is directed not only against

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[8]Harold R. Cook, Missionary Life and Work, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), p. 336.

[9]Soltau, op. cit., p. 109.

political and governmental personages but often against members of the white race generally, including missionaries.

In Africa recently, nearly a century of Christian missions was rudely interrupted and largely forgotten in the wake of inflamed racial and nationalistic tension in the newly independent Congo. Missionaries were not exempt from suffering through riot, ravage, and rape. The fact that the educated Congolese are products of missionary schools seems to make no difference in the matter of racial animosity. A newswriter puts it bluntly when he says,

> So perhaps it has all been for nothing, perhaps from David Livingstone in the last century to the ravished women of yesterday the white man in Africa has died to no purpose--his effort no more than a feather in the wind, a feather that was there, a pretty thing for an instant, and then was blown away in this hurricane of license miscalled liberty.[10]

Today's missionary must go out with the knowledge that his present field of service may be interrupted at any time. Perhaps he may be shifted without warning to a new place of service demanding fresh adjustments. Or it may be that he will have to give up his particular calling and return to work at home. The dangers of war and destruction may reach anywhere. There is no "safe place" anymore. Today's missionary is less sure of his country's protection as he seeks to identify himself with the nationals with whom he lives.

The missionary must contend not only with strange religions, but he must also reckon with new ideologies that are competing for the heart and mind of the newly-awakened nationals. Communism may have reached into

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[10]Stuart Cloete, "End of Era with Threat of the Jungle Taking Over," Life, Vol. 49 (August 1, 1960), p. 15.

the life of the people among whom the missionary is working. Other political or socialistic alliances may bid for the national's loyalty. There will be repeated temptation for the missionary to be drawn into negative battle against these forces to the neglect of the positive presentation of the gospel he has been called to preach. His own immaturity may goad him into conflicts that will rob him of his main mission.

There is, moreover, the problem of the "indigenous church." The self-supporting church is the goal of modern missions. The indigenous church can be described as "of the people, for the people, and by the people." The task of helping to create this new thing among the people presents a very real challenge to the "foreigner." It puts great responsibility on a man to inculcate this God-given concept of the church into the minds of those he has come to serve. He must help neither too little nor too much. The task calls for mature thinking. For there is here an extremely delicate balance demanding an understanding of self and others. The situation calls for flexibility and adaptability. As one authority states,

> Today's missionary is called to a changing role. He is called to a role which cannot even be completely defined, to tasks which he himself will help develop. He is called to a role which is complex, ever changing, always demanding. He is called to creative thinking to meet the challenge of the future.[11]

With quickly changing scenes in the political and scientific worlds, the missionary is forced to a new type of resourcefulness. New

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[11] Four Changes Challenge the Christian Student, A brochure prepared by the Personnel Department (New York: American Baptist Foreign Missions Societies, n. d.).

methods, projects, and approaches are in constant demand.[12] All of a man's powers will be tested in the modern missionary situation. As one authority writes, "Adaptability is a prime need for a successful missionary, especially in these days when conditions and situations are changing with such kaliedoscopic rapidity."[13] Living with uncertainty calls for great adjustive powers.

II. THE NEED AS IT AFFECTS THE MISSIONARY AS EDUCATOR

Concerning the missionary's task as educator, Cook writes, "Teaching is without doubt the broadest field of missionary work. Nearly every missionary is involved in it in one way or another. And it touches practically every other phase of missionary activity."[14] Christian education cannot be severed from any activity of the church, whether at home or abroad. Since each agency and service of the church is in some way related to the educative process, all church workers to some degree are educators. As Cook says, "Even the evangelist needs to be a teacher."[15] While it may be said that education is a general function of the total church, it is also true that education is a highly specialized function, having its own formal organization and particular teaching functions.[16] A

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[12]Cook, op. cit., p. 40.

[13]Soltau, op. cit., p. 85.

[14]Cook, op. cit., p. 241.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Harold Carlton Mason, The Teaching Task of the Local Church (Winona Lake, Indiana: Light and Life Press, 1960), p. 11.

large percentage of missionaries is involved in this more formal aspect of Christian education.

In the work of Christianization, the worth of the Christian school cannot be over-estimated. A recent publication makes this apt comment, " The church school has been Catholicism's most powerful agency, and on the mission field it is Protestantism's most effective means of evangelizing today."[17] In view of the fact that a world abroad is now learning to read, and that hitherto suppressed peoples are becoming increasingly self-conscious, the task of the Christian educator was never more challenging.

The situation, however, is the more complicated because of a serious lack of facilities and equipment. Our missionary teacher must face these added difficulties in addition to his own lack of "national" background and language barrier. Cook, referring to the work of the Sunday School abroad, gives a glimpse into the practical aspects of this problem,

> There are some differences between Sunday School work at home and on the field. In most fields there is an acute shortage of printed materials. In some, the pupils don't yet know how to read. So, much more has come to depend on purely oral instruction.
>
> In addition, the shortage of teachers is much more serious than at home. New converts from heathenism, with no background of Christian civilization and no acquaintance with Sunday Schools, cannot be expected to become teachers overnight. This means that a program of teacher training must begin as soon as possible if there is to be a Sunday School. Finally, it is not always possible to use the standardized lessons, so the missionary may have to plan his own.[18]

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[17]J. M. Price and others, A Survey of Religious Education (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1959), p. 16.

[18]Cook, op. cit., p. 243.

It takes maturity to face great needs such as these. The situation calls for a high degree of personal resourcefulness.

If the schools are to become in time part of an indigenous set-up, the missionary-educator must keep the goal always in mind. Such ultimate aim demands that a teacher be more than a teacher of subjects. He must be a teacher of teachers. For some teachers, who love the classroom and their subject matter, this additional undertaking can be a real burden. The situation again points to the need for maturation in the teacher's personality. The permanence and ultimate success of the work on the field may well depend on the missionary's attitude and aptitude in training nationals.[19]

The educator abroad often has to assume other duties besides those connected with the classroom. Administrative duties, counselling, supervising dormitories, and other mission jobs may vie for his time and attention. In dealing with these problems of educational missions Barton says,

> It should be made clear that one can hardly expect, in this stage of missionary development, to confine himself to one department of work exclusively and say that he is sent to serve simply in that one line.[20]

The same writer points out that the teacher cannot consider his work to be done when he leaves the classroom.[21] In some missionary situations the teacher must eat, sleep, play, and worship with his students as well as

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[19] Ibid., p. 246.

[20] James L. Barton, Educational Missions (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1913), p. 182.

[21] Ibid., p. 183.

teach them. This may involve almost twenty-four hour association and responsibility. A tremendous demand is put upon the teacher in such a situation, especially when unpleasant disciplinary duties or personality conflicts are also involved. More than one missionary devoted to his teaching duties has left his chosen profession or broken under the strain because of his many extra-curricular chores.

The missionary teacher is often called on to change his modes of thinking. Western thought patterns with their customary appeal to logic, may be incomprehensible to an Easterner.[22] Allegorical and other illustrative thought presentations may require new disciplines on the part of the teacher. Assumption on the part of the missionary that Western ways are superior can have disruptive consequences.[23]

The teacher abroad faces another danger that has plagued missions for generations: that of coming to regard education as an end in itself. A maturity that will help keep the primary purpose always in view is needed. One can lose his primary purpose while busily engaged in the mechanics of educating. Cook testifies to this fact,

> This has actually happened in places where education for example, has become an end in itself. Some mission schools are missionary only in the sense that a missionary society is responsible for them and mission funds support them.[24]

The missionary can become a mere educator, losing himself in a mere academic program, failing to reach his ultimate objective of leading souls to Christ.

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[22] Ibid., p. 202.

[23] Ibid., p. 203.

[24] Cook, op. cit., p. 199.

The difficulties presenting themselves to the educational missionary venturing abroad are such as call for a well-balanced, mature personality. The teacher's personality is his greatest asset to effective teaching. He must teach by example as well as by precept. Lack of maturity and emotional control can seriously impair his work. Barton speaks to the point when he says,

> Special mention must be made of the supreme necessity in an educator of self-control. The Asiatic looks upon an exhibition of temper not only as a loss of dignity, but almost as an unpardonable sin. There are few acts forbidden by the Decalogue that would not be regarded by Eastern people of education and refinement as of secondary importance compared with the loss of temper. For a teacher to exhibit such a weakness in the presence of his pupils would militate tremendously against his influence, and if repeated, would probably negative all of his or her qualifications, however choice they might be. Any young man or woman who cannot keep his temper to himself, even in the face of the most trying provocation, should not seek work in the foreign fields. A missionary should always have good command of himself, and so be able to secure and hold the respect and confidence of all who know him.[25]

The missionary educator must face his task in the spirit of St. Paul, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1).

III. THE NEED AS IT AFFECTS MISSIONARY BOARDS

Missionary boards assume great responsibilities when they commission and send out missionaries. The responsibilities fall into three main catagories. Perhaps the first and greatest responsibility is that of being an agent of the church of Christ. As a commissioning body, boards must select representatives of Jesus Christ who will go abroad and establish His reputation. Not only to Christ and the church in general

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[25]Barton, op. cit., p. 201.

are boards responsible, but also to the people of the particular denomination or local congregations that support them. A third area of responsibility relates to the candidates and missionaries themselves.

Mission boards can rather easily determine a person's suitability for service in the areas of physical health, education, and practical experience. Objective criteria and examination can more easily be applied to proper selection in these areas. Greater difficulty faces a screening committee that must also decide whether a candidate has the needed spiritual and personality qualifications. Admittedly this is a cause of much concern. Cook stresses this problem when he says, "Besides, its physical and educational requirements, the mission is always interested in the personality of the one who seeks appointment."[26] The mission boards realize that the success of the appointee will be related to the impression his personality makes. Cook again comments on the importance of the effect of the missionary's personality when he says,

> The missionary, of all people, needs to make the right kind of impressions. He not only has to get a hearing for his message, but that message is so tied in with his own life that the impression of his life and the impression of the Gospel are likely to be the same thing.[27]

Personnel is a primary problem in most enterprises but, according to Thayer, who made an extensive study of the problem, in missions it is the most significant determining factor.[28] Another authority has

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[26]Harold R. Cook, An Introduction to the Study of Christian Missions (Chicago: Moody Press, 1954), p. 111.

[27]Ibid., p. 112.

[28]Clarence R. Thayer, "The Relationship of Certain Psychological Test Scores to Subsequent Ratings of Missionary Field Success" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, The University of Pittsburgh, 1951), p. 2.

estimated that nearly half of the cases of missionary withdrawals he studied are due to some form of personal maladjustment, emotional or otherwise.[29] One survey, which places fifty-nine percent of the blame for missionary failures on the problem of missionary relationships, explains the situation as follows.

> That is, the missionaries concerned were unable to make a successful adjustment either to the authority of the mission, to their fellow missionaries, to the people among whom they labored, or in a number of cases between husband and wife.[30]

Findings such as these point out the seriousness of the problem which selection committees face in choosing future missionaries.

The task of the missions board is added to when it is remembered that they have a pledge to keep with the local supporting congregations. These churches are concerned about the financial investment of sacred funds which they themselves have provided. Since for many church members missionary giving is their greatest investment, they are rightly interested in how their money is spent. Higdon, who is under no illusion concerning this problem of financing missionaries, speaks of it as the $10,000 question,

> It costs a board about $10,000 to prepare a missionary, send and maintain him on the field a year or two, and return him home. We have saved several times $10,000 since 1943 by the method of candidate selection described in this book.[31]

The board, moreover, must seek out a candidate who promises to be spiritually potent in the lives of the congregation supporting him. He

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[29]E. K. Higdon, New Missionaries for New Days (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1956), p. 26.

[30]Cook, Missionary Life and Work, p. 117.

[31]Higdon, op. cit., p. 122.

should be one whose character and testimony will call forth general admiration. He should be able not only to represent well the needs of his field but to inspire them to much prayer and missionary activity generally.

The spiritually unstable missionary can do incalculable harm to the missionary spirit of a church, causing it to let down in its prayer-life for missions and in its financial givings. Furthermore, a record of failure among missionary candidates can greatly discourage young people inclined toward a life of service on the mission field. Repeated missionary failure inevitably affects the recruiting of future missionaries. An immature, embittered failure could create much distrust and doubt in the church and in those considering the missionary calling. The successful, satisfied missionary can be a great influence on the lives of youth faced with vocational decisions. The disappointed or disgruntled missionary can also influence youth. In the face of today's urgent need for missionaries, the board's decision concerning candidates is of paramount concern. Dr. Clyde Taylor, Executive Secretary of The Evangelical Foreign Missions Association, recently spoke of the church's urgent need of missionaries,

> There is a shortage of missionary candidates. Immediately following World War II, we had a surplus of men and women applying for foreign missionary service. This no longer exists. . . .
>
> It is estimated that nearly three thousand tribes are still unreached, and missionaries are desperately needed for this challenging task. The call of God to go into all the world with the message of salvation still remains, and young men and young women who will answer that call are desperately needed.[32]

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[32]"Missionaries Still Needed," The Missionary Standard, LIX (March, 1960), p. 3.

Perhaps an even graver responsibility rests on screening committees when it is remembered that the candidates they commission literally carry the reputation of Christ in their hands. St. Paul wrote these words,

> Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart (II Corinthians 3:3).

The missionary himself, as a living epistle introducing Christianity, is under these circumstances of primary importance. Failure here is likely to have serious consequences on the field. Jack Dain, in discussing the matter, suggests the seriousness of this failure when he says,

> I would further suggest that this wastage in missionary recruitment is not in any sense related to the actual number of candidates who return home or are unable to return to the field. One misfit on a mission field can do far more damage in two years than the good which might accrue from several suitable missionaries. Wastage of any kind in missionary recruitment has serious repercussions—in the lives of the missionaries themselves, in the actual sphere of their missionary work, and the home churches, and it is against this background that the problem of wastage should be set. It is not, for instance, satisfactory for any of us to be able to say that 80 percent of our recruits have proved suitable. What I would like to ask is, how much trouble have the 20 percent caused in the church and in the communities to which they have gone? The problem must therefore not be regarded from a purely factual or numerical basis, but on the much wider repercussions of what results from a misfit or from wastage among missionary recruits.[33]

Since the nationals usually do not have a background of Christian culture and examples upon which to base their judgment of Christianity, the missionary is Christianity to them. If he fails, Christianity is likely to fail, so far as they are concerned. Demonstration counts far more than words.

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[33]A. Jack Dain, The Screening of Missionary Candidates (Washington, D. C.: North Washington Press, Inc., n. d.), pp. 8-9.

An interesting example of "suiting the action to the word" is found in the experience of Gladys Aylward. Miss Aylward, a missionary to China, was called to a village to stop a prison riot. She hesitated at first and protested that she would be killed if she attempted to enter the screaming, riot-torn prison where the men were killing each other. Yet, the governor of the prison insisted that she go in. He said, "You preach it everywhere, in the streets and villages. If you preach the truth--if your God protects you from harm--then you can stop this riot." Knowing her message was identified with her conduct, Miss Aylward felt led to go into the prison. By the grace of God she was able to stop the riot. Maturity met the challenge, and faith in Christianity and conversions resulted.[34] She had demonstrated the truth that the man and the message can never be separated. It is all-important that the board seek out young men and women who give promise of being able to solve their difficulties in a mature way.

A third major area of the responsibility of missionary boards is that of safeguarding the interests of the candidates themselves. The eager candidate, with a desire to work for God and his fellowman, may over-estimate the potential in himself. He may not foresee the possibility of breakdown with its possible effects not only on himself but on those about him. Higdon points out the importance of wise action on the part of the screening committee in this regard:

> Many young persons have been saved from the disappointment, heartbreak and frustration that choke a life trying to work in the

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[34]Alan Burgess, The Small Woman (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1957), p. 89.

> wrong place; others saved from unhappiness and the bitterness that stifle individuals that are doing a wrong job even in the right place; and still others saved from an emotionally starved or a neurotically unbalanced existence. These are differences that change life.[35]

The candidates who are saved from unsuccessful missionary careers may well be saved for a very useful ministry at home. The mission board can be an agent of conservation at this point.

Inasmuch as mission boards in recent years have become increasingly conscious of these great responsibilities, they have adopted measures to insure better means of candidate selection and preparation. This keener awareness of need has caused a shift of emphasis in missionary preparation. Less than ten years ago the emphasis was more on the providing of useful information and techniques, but primary emphasis is now placed on attitudes and on preparation for the strains of missionary living.[36] To help meet the need for placing the right candidates on the field, three main sources of information and help are provided. These are questionnaires and information sheets, interviews and tests, and training programs of various types. These approaches provide opportunity for both the candidates and the board to learn about probable success or failure on the field.

Questionnaires and information blanks have been used by boards for a long time. These forms are generally acknowledged as an insufficient

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[35]Higdon, op. cit., p. 122.

[36]New Trends in Missionary Training in the United States, A paper prepared by the Secretary of the Committee on Missionary Personnel (New York: Division of Foreign Missions, National Council of the Churches of Christ, 1957), p. 4.

source of information, but because of distance and the financial impracticality of personal interviews, they are the most common means of obtaining information about the candidate. Each board has a set of information blanks to meet its own particular needs. For instance, the Board of International Missions of the former Evangelical and Reformed Church, now a part of the United Church of Christ, uses a representative series of blanks, typical of many mission boards. First is a two-page preliminary information blank. This asks for personal information about birth, citizenship, occupation, family and marital relations, health, school and recreation, church relationship, relationship to Jesus Christ, motive for considering missionary work; and it asks for the names of three persons for further reference. Next comes a six-page, detailed expansion of the blank just mentioned; it is entitled Personal Information blank. This second form enquires more specifically into the personality of the volunteer, with fifty-four questions about his past and present relationships. Questions are asked about group and community relationships, work experiences, religious and lifework interests, and about certain conditions relating to appointment. This form asks for five referees. Following these personal information blanks, the volunteer is required to fill out an application blank.

Through the personal information blanks the mission boards begin to probe for clues concerning the applicant's personality. Backgrounds of the personality are sought in questions about family relationships and family attitudes toward the candidate's prospective missionary service. In studying the information on candidate qualifications of twenty-three missionary organizations, the writer of this thesis found consistent

emphasis on the family and environmental background of the prospective missionary. A device commonly used to discover facts about the developmental influences of the applicant's life is the request for a life sketch written by the applicant himself. The Southern Baptist Department of Missionary Personnel requires a life sketch that is to be written over a period of weeks, requiring sixteen to twenty-two pages in length. In their instructions on how to write this history, they state that past appointees of theirs assert that this biographical sketch has done more to help them understand themselves and God's working in their lives than any other single experience.[37] Personnel secretaries generally, have also found this life history approach to be indispensable in a deeper understanding of the candidate. A sample question included in this comprehensive life sketch calls for the subject's discussion of his personality with respect to "fundamental mood, adjustability, resourcefulness, endurance, self-reliance, confidence, sociability, etc."[38]

Questions dealing with aims, motives, and attitudes probe into the applicant's philosophy of life in relation to his future service. Questions about his reading habits, his devotional life, recreation, hobbies, and cultural interests, and other personal habits give opportunity for insight into the person's relationship with himself. The candidates view of social relationships is sought through questions on

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[37]"Instructions for Writing Life History," (form used by the Department of Missionary Personnel, Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, Richmond, Virginia).

[38]Ibid.

his experiences and attitudes in working with other groups, denominations, races and under national leaders. In their preliminary information blank, Baptist Mid-Missions, of Cleveland, Ohio, the candidate is asked to give a fully detailed account of any gross immorality or sin in which he may have been involved. Other mission boards have made similar requests. Such questions surely call for a maturity that can honestly and objectively face these issues. It may be that in filling out these blanks the candidate will for the first time in his life actually come to grips with the whole problem of his maturation for the mission field.

In addition to the preliminary and personal information blanks and the application form, the confidential references are an important source of information about the prospective missionary's personality. The people given for reference by the candidate may also be asked to supply the names of more acquaintances of the candidate until as many as twenty to twenty-five references are received. Seven out of twelve reference forms of different mission boards, examined by the writer of this thesis, were found to possess almost the same content. Other boards, covering much of these materials, reflect their own peculiar interests by including other types of questions. All boards inquire in more or less detail into the subject's health, attractiveness, intelligence, and care of finances. Eleven of the twelve reference forms ask about the candidate's family, his environmental background, his emotional stability and motivation, and for a summary rating of the candidate's promise of success as a missionary.

In a typical recommendation form sent to a "reference," emotional maturity is characterized by the use of the following items: somewhat

over-emotional, inclined to be apathetic, usually well-balanced and controlled, maintains balance and control under most difficult circumstances, over-controlled, erratic in attitude and action, conventional responses, spontaneously expresses appropriate feelings, sensitive and easily irritated, tends to be unresponsive, depends on family, and adjustment to others in family.[39] If these questions are thoughtfully and accurately answered, these questionnaires should yield considerable insight into the degree of personality maturation of the candidate.

Further inquiry covers such personality aspects as achievement, leadership, teamwork, responsiveness to others, and religious experience. Seventy-five percent (nine out of twelve) of the reference forms examined listed limitations recognized as handicaps, and asked if any of these limitations described the prospect. Fifty percent of the twelve forms examined consider the following items as limitations to effectiveness: impatience, intolerance, argumentativeness, to be domineering, sullenness, cockiness, criticalness; easy embarrassment, offence, discouragement, depression, or irritation; prejudice to groups, races, nationalities; exclusive friendships, and a lack of humor. Items less frequently mentioned were: frequent worry and anxiety, nervousness, tenseness and moodiness.

Rating scales are provided in some reference forms. An example of this kind of device is the one on emotional maturity in the scale put out by the Department of World Missions of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, Table I, on page 30. This particular scale gives the referee an

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[39]A typical example of the reference forms mentioned may be seen in that used by The Department of Foreign Missions of the General Board, Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, Missouri.

TABLE I

REFERENCE FORM RATING SCALE FOR DETERMINING THE EMOTIONAL MATURITY OF MISSIONARY CANDIDATES OF THE EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH

Emotional Maturity	Below Average			Average			Above Average		
a. Adjustment to others in family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
b. Dependence on others in family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
c. Understanding of fellow-men	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
d. Deference to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
e. Confidence--no self-pity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
f. Self-control	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
g. Humility and patience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
h. Definiteness of purpose	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
i. Sense of humor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
j. Responsibleness without worry	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
k. Gets work done on time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
l. Accepts new ideas readily	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
m. Mental acumen	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
n. Intellectual honesty--unprejudiced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Comments:

opportunity to judge the degree of maturity achieved in each area. Other mission boards use variations of rating scales which they feel best suited to their particular needs. Most of them ask for personal comment whenever it can amplify the picture given by the rating scale used.

Another device used to help the referee describe the personality under consideration is one that furnishes a list of characteristics from which is to be chosen those items that best characterize the personality of the candidate. An example of this is also taken from the reference form of The Evangelical United Brethren Church, as shown in Table II on page 32.

Mission boards, in their efforts to help the candidates, often provide pamphlets of other types of printed materials on the qualifications needed for mission work. A helpful little booklet used by a number of mission boards is entitled, Get Ready for a Real Job.[40] This booklet is a series of quizzes designed to make the reader face his world and then himself. In facing himself he looks at his health, emotional stability, intelligence, social sensibility, religious literacy, and finally his motives and compulsion to serve. Prefacing the quiz on emotional stability, the reader is advised as follows,

> If the missionary is not sound physically, he may break down. If he is not stable emotionally, his colleagues may break down. You don't have to be a nervous wreck to drive your companions to distraction.[41]

The quiz then asks for the candidate to rate himself with a yes or no

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[40] Get Ready for a Real Job - Do You Have What It Takes? (Indianapolis: The United Christian Missionary Society).

[41] Ibid.

TABLE II

REFERENCE FORM SELECTION LIST FOR CHARACTERIZING
THE PERSONALITY OF THE MISSIONARY CANDIDATE
OF THE EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH

Underline the characteristics which most nearly describe this person:

adaptable	devout	industrious	reticent
adventuresome	dominant	integrity	self-pity
aggressive	domineering	intolerant	self-protective
afraid	egotistical	isolated	sensitive
alert	escaping	kind	serene
argumentative	friendly	leadership	slow
avoided	frugal	materialistic	submissive
brilliant	frustrated	mature	sullen
confused	gossipy	neat	tactful
constant	growing	patient	tense
contagious	hostile	possessive	timid
cooperative	humble	profound	unattractive
creative	imaginative	quiet	unstable
dependent	immature	resourceful	winsome
depressed	impatient	responsible	

answer to the following questions on emotional stability:

> Do I control my emotions?
> Do I reach decisions by combining thought and feeling?
> Do I assume responsibilities without worry or fret?
> Am I a good loser?
> Do I have a sense of humor?
> Can I take advice from others?
> Do I 'get along' with people?[42]

Mission boards are generous in supplying such helpful information to volunteers. Sometimes detailed brochures are given telling of the specific needs of different vocational fields, such as that of the missionary teacher, doctor, or agriculturalist. Some boards, such as the Oriental Missionary Society of Los Angeles, send bibliographies of required reading to help orient the future missionary. Interdenominational cooperation has resulted in the production of helpful materials to aid boards and individuals in their efforts to assess suitability for missionary service. Both the Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association of New York and the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association of Washington, D. C., offer services to missionary boards in providing helpful printed materials. The Missionary Research Library of New York gives vital information, much in the form of statistics, in its bulletins and book lists. These and other agencies willingly provide such services to help mission boards in their problems of candidate selection.

While written sources of information offer real help to the missionary board, they cannot be relied on alone. In trying to arrive at a candidate's emotional stability, for example, other approaches need to be sought to supplement the written sources. Emotional stability and

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[42] Ibid.

maturity are difficult to assess.[43] Higdon calls attention to this difficulty when he says,

> Replies to our questionnaires about volunteers were non-critical, and those who made them were prone to rate a student too highly. In short, we had to discount some recommendations as much as sixty-five percent.[44]

Because written forms present only a partial picture of a candidate, mission boards are using other methods besides.

Person-to-person contact can reveal what paper cannot. For this reason, boards are turning to personal interviews and are beginning to administer standardized tests of intelligence and personality. An English board has the practice of having personal interviews between each missionary candidate and each member of the candidate committee, usually involving six to eight interviews of two hours or more each.[45] Sometimes these interviews may take the form of an overnight visit in the home. Dain, who feels that nothing can substitute for this intimate personal contact with a recruit, draws attention to the role of the board in its screening of candidates,

> I believe it is similarly possible for men and women of God to be trained in personal interviewing and counselling so that they have that same spiritual insight and skill which, allied with the illumination of the Holy Spirit, will enable them to assess a missionary candidate's suitability with considerable success.[46]

The program of personal interviewing and counselling may be

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[43] Dain, op. cit., p. 22.

[44] Higdon, op. cit., p. 57.

[45] Dain, op. cit., p. 27.

[46] Ibid., p. 26.

extended to include the help of professional specialists, such as a psychiatrist. Interviews are often combined with a testing program. This may be an extensive program such as the one referred to by Higdon in his discussion of improved methods of candidate examination,

> These examinations consisted of a thorough physical check-up, a personality analysis, usually the Rorschach (ink blot), and an interview with a psychiatrist. It required the better part of three days while the prospect was an in-patient in a hospital. It was administered after he had completed his preparation, both academic and practical, and was the final step before appointment.[47]

Investigation is backed up with statistics that give increasing weight to the value of the interviewing and testing programs. With its plan of psychological testing and interviewing, the United Christian Missionary Society has reduced loss up to 16.6 percent.[48] Higdon comments on the extent to which this kind of testing is now being used,

> As chairman of its sub-committee on psychologic tests and psychologic interviews, the author recently helped make a survey of forty boards of missions and learned that thirty-one of them use testing techniques, or psychiatric interviews, or both.[49]

It is to be expected that this type of testing program will be increasingly utilized by mission boards; for, as Thayer points out, the odds are 99 to 1 that psychological testing with proved tests has real value in the selection of personnel; and he adds that these are not a replacement of other methods, but designed rather to make them more efficient.[50]

It is the concern of mission boards to use all methods that will

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[47] Higdon, loc. cit.

[48] Ibid., p. 113.

[49] Ibid., p. 13.

[50] Thayer, op. cit., p. 274.

help the need for finding the right candidates. Realizing that maturity is a relative matter and that no candidate is perfect, the boards use various ways to aid their candidates in growth and preparation. The sources of information already discussed are used not only to weed out the possible misfits, but also to encourage the potentials in the candidates they hope to accept. Since candidate supply is not too plentiful, it is necessary to conserve and prepare those who show adequate promise. With the information from references, interviews and tests, guidance in growth may become quite practicable.

Training programs that specialize in missionary needs are provided. Some boards require or recommend attendance at one of the specialized missionary schools or conferences.[51] A training program may call for the pursuit of a graduate school program in missions such as that offered by The Kennedy School of Missions of the Hartford Seminary Foundation of Hartford, Connecticut, or by Scarritt College for Christian Workers in Nashville, Tennessee.[52] These schools offer a variety of missionary courses, some of which are highly specialized. Short-term programs are offered through a number of summer schools and summer conferences. Summer orientation programs are provided in conferences by the Committee of Missionary Personnel of the Division of Foreign Missions of the National Council of Churches.

A rather recent trend in missionary preparation calls for the

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[51] "Qualifications: Age, Health, Education," (New York: The Methodist Church Board of Missions, mimeographed).

[52] Higdon, op. cit., p. 83.

candidate's spending some time as an intern. Higdon defines missionary internship as a work opportunity for preparation of a practical nature in a setting somewhat like that the missionary finds abroad.[53] The period of internship may be spent in migrant camps, social service conferences and projects, work camps, craft schools, settlement areas, or home mission fields. One such "school" is the Jungle Camp under the auspices of the Wycliffe Bible Translators. Located in the Mexican jungle, this program is designed to prepare its youthful participants to make necessary adjustments from the "educated, refined type of life" to a life characterized by primitive jungle conditions.[54]

In Detroit, Michigan, an internship program places its students into local churches to work for a period of seven months under the supervision of internship directors. In this situation of actual ministry, "the intern begins to discover his weaknesses and come face to face with himself."[55] Weekly workshops as well as regular personal counselling sessions help to reveal immaturity and areas of weakness. Of the Detroit program, its sponsors have this to say,

> Comprehensive evaluation reports are made regarding each intern at the close of the program. These are shared with the intern before being filed or sent to his board. The aptitude for growth and development is noted as well as an overall presentation of strengths and weaknesses. The mission boards are thus furnished with valuable

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[53] Ibid., p. 84.

[54] Ethel E. Wallis and Mary A. Bennett, Two Thousand Tongues to Go (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1959), pp. 140-144.

[55] "Information Bulletin of Missionary Internship Inc." (Detroit, Michigan: Missionary Internship Inc., n. d.), p. 3.

> data which can assist them in making further decisions regarding their missionary candidates.[56]

Such a program should prove well worthwhile; for it gives the intern and the missionary board an opportunity to come to grips with some of the vital problems of the work in an actual ministering situation. For one thing, the Detroit program has issued in a "personal realization by about ten percent of the interns that they should not proceed on to the field;" and it has helped to steer missionary misfits into places of service elsewhere.[57] According to the testimony of its leaders, this particular "school" of internship has sometimes succeeded in bringing about a remarkable maturation in a candidate's personality, enabling rapid adjustment to conditions on the mission field. Programs like this not only save young people from becoming tragic misfits, but they constitute a substantial saving of church monies. Missionary Internship Inc. also extends its services to missionaries on furlough and to on-the-field counselling help.[58]

Missionary boards generally are to be commended for their helpfulness in preparing candidates for the rigors of missionary life. The expenditure of time and funds, when both are usually at a premium, points to the seriousness of the problem of missionary personnel preparation and selection. In the final analysis this matter of personality maturity in the missionary is unquestionably the most vital problem facing a missionary board.

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[56] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid., p. 6.

CHAPTER III

THE MATURE PERSONALITY MEETING THE NEED

The human personality has been a major theme of literature and life from the beginning. Personality reached its perfection when God chose this medium in which to reveal Himself to men. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). As life touches life, personality has always been the ultimate in communication.

The word itself goes back to early Greek drama. Persona originally referred to a theatrical mask used by the actors. Allport traces the development of meanings associated with this word through fifty steps from the original Greek concept to his own present psychological definition of personality as ". . . the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment."[1] Thus has personality moved from the romantic consideration attached to it in pre-Christian Greek drama to a subject of scientific study in the field of human psychology.

Although psychology is admittedly a young science, and often a necessarily subjective study, it has given many valid insights into the composition and function of the human personality. Accepting adjustment or response to environment to be an essential part of the definition of personality, logical questions would be, how are these adjustments made and what judgments can be made concerning them? From the standpoint of

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[1]Allport, op. cit., pp. 25-48.

religion, judgment of human behavior is an age-old process. In the Ten Commandments the Bible gives a very definite standard by which to measure men's moral responses to life. From the scientist's viewpoint, however, these value judgments may be considered as amoral; instead of being held good or bad, they must be classified mature or immature. The Christian psychologist would take a position combining the Biblical concept of sin with the scientist's view that there are those responses to life that are not immoral but immature.

That certain adjustments to life are more desirable than others, all psychologists will agree; the problem is always one of extent or degree. Although personality maturity cannot be perfectly delineated, it is nevertheless true that it can be arrived at in broad outline.

To Wallace Emerson the chief marks of maturity are self-realization, self-discipline, and self-expression.[2] Allport's criteria are not unlike Emerson's: extension of the self, self-objectification, and a unifying philosophy of life.[3] Another psychologist dealing with personality maturity, Louella Cole, asserts that emotional maturity will help one to face reality about himself, others, and life in general.[4] It would seem that the marks of the mature personality are, broadly speaking, three: a healthy relationship with oneself, with others, and with life in its total context.

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[2]Wallace Emerson, Outline of Psychology (Wheaton, Illinois: Van Kampen Press, Inc., 1953), p. 424.

[3]Allport, op. cit., pp. 213-231.

[4]Cole, loc. cit.

I. TWO MEANS TO MATURITY

Maturity is not a mere product of self-determination and self-discipline. Although these play their significant parts, other influences are also at work. A host of environmental factors interact with the personality to make it what it is. As Liebman says, "Our personality, far from being a self-created substance, is a fabric woven on the loom of other personalities from the cradle to the grave."[5] Among the major channels through which these factors operate are the school and the church. The school has a rich influence on the maturation of the thought process. The impact of the church upon the religious life of the personality will in some measure reflect the degree of maturity attained by the church's membership and its leaders. But perhaps the most decisive influences brought to bear on the developing personality are the home and the Holy Spirit.

The Influence of the Home

The influence of the home life from infancy provides the foundation of personality development. No one ever survives completely the force of his home environment. Psychology has placed much emphasis on the home as the greatest determining factor in personality development. Freud and others would trace much of the adult problem to childhood, where roots first take hold. Louella Cole is in point when she says,

> In recent decades the relatively new science of child psychology has brought the importance of childhood home to parents and teachers,

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[5]Joshua L. Liebman, Peace of Mind (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949, p. 63.

> and rightly so because it is the period during which the fundamental patterns of reaction are determined.[6]

Developmental psychology places the most crucial period of the establishment of basic personality patterns in the experiences of infancy, at times going so far as to include even pre-natal influences.[7] From his study of emotional maturity, Leon Saul concludes, "Adults change but little--once their fundamental reaction patterns are established, which is usually by about 5 years of age--and altering them is difficult."[8] The home functions as the major influence during these early, formative years. The types of response unconsciously adopted during the first five or six years of the child's life greatly affect the reaction of the child to the later influences of the church and the school. The home as a rule best serves the need for the right development of the whole personality. Even when surrounded by a hostile environment, it may be a sanctuary for proper development.[9]

Maturity, like religion, is more likely to be caught than taught. Though the teachings of the home are important, the emotional climate produced by the attitudes and actions of the parents and others in the home, is even more important. Parental maturation, showing itself in the prosaic round of life as it is lived daily in the home, is the guiding light of the child's development. As Fritz Kunkel has clearly stated,

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[6]Cole, op. cit., p. 15.

[7]Leon J. Saul, Emotional Maturity (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1947), p. 298.

[8]Ibid., p. 300.

[9]Overstreet, op. cit., p. 224.

> Our children will show exactly the same percentage of integration and disintegration as we possess ourselves. Only the children usually reveal their difficulties more openly. Older people are more successful in hiding them. By our fruits we may know ourselves.[10]

Like parent, like child. The reaction patterns of the adults in the home give the small child his first examples of how to respond to his environment. The home puts its determinative stamp on the personality in the atmosphere it creates rather than in its conscious attempts to educate.

Gordon Allport suggests the significance of parental example when he writes,

> Tastes, mannerisms and attitudes repeat the parent pattern, even though the direct parental influence has many years been removed. Might it not be that inherited traits lie dormant and rise to take form within the personality many years after childhood and after the period of general maturation have passed?[11]

Parental maturation can go far to provide the kind of home environment essential to the development of the personality.

Love, order, and discipline in the home provide a warm and favorable climate conducive to healthy personality growth. There are no substitutes for love. It is basic to worthy home environment. Rightly expressed, love is maturity. As Saint Paul states in I Corinthians 13, love causes one to put away childish ways, to act as an adult. This mature adulthood may well be explained in the terms of unselfish love. In an atmosphere of love the child can naturally learn to accept and return love without frustration or defense. For the missionary-to-be, this is a sound, needed background; for his ministry will depend on his

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[10]Fritz Kunkel, In Search of Maturity (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), p. 127.

[11]Allport, op. cit., p. 149.

ability to love and be loved.

Love shines to greatest advantage in the home that is well-ordered and disciplined. Disorganization creates waste and frustration. Order promotes growth. As Burnham says, "The simple tasks in the well-regulated home favor the growth of the wholesome personality."[12]

Love and rational discipline go hand in hand. The home that provides this happy combination, though it may lack many other desirable elements, provides the foundation necessary to meet the problems of adult life in a complex society. This is beautifully illustrated by an inconspicuous phrase in the Book of Esther. Faced with the choice of saving the life of her people at the probable loss of her own, Esther could meet the challenge with courage because she had learned discipline from childhood: ". . . for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him" (Esther 2:20).

While love furnishes the emotional security foundational to maturity, discipline is the factor that regulates and promotes the work of maturation. Houghton's statement confirms this assertion when he writes,

> A leading missionary once told me that he had had to investigate a number of cases of missionaries who, for one cause or another, had broken down on the field and had had to give up their missionary career. In every case there was a background of an undisciplined or indulgent home, not necessarily an unsympathetic home from the Christian standpoint.[13]

For the missionary, who may be expected to go to the ends of the earth and lead a disciplined life, the background of a well-organized home life

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[12]Burnham, op. cit., p. 407.

[13]A. T. Houghton, Preparing to be a Missionary (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1956), p. 35.

is virtually an indispensable part of his preparation.

The factor of the missionary's own home background is sometimes determinative of the kind of home he himself establishes on the foreign field. It is commonly true that a person tends to build his own home after the moral and spiritual pattern of the home in which he was himself reared. It is imperative that the missionary have a home-life on the field that bears vital Christian witness. Soltau insists that the example of a properly-trained missionary family is an eloquent Christian testimony among nationals abroad.[14]

The Influence of the Holy Spirit

The missionary task is so exacting in its demands on the individual that man of himself is inadequate to it. Buttressed even with the best of home background, he has to have help beyond himself. He must needs be open to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Mature Christian personality cannot be arrived at without the help of the ministry of the Third Person in the Trinity. The missionary who fails to appreciate this fact will eventually find himself unequal to his task.

Human personality is the workshop of the Holy Spirit, the medium of His creative endeavors. While one may not have been responsible for the shaping of his past environment, one can, by placing himself at the disposal of God's Spirit, experience that kind of personality growth that is essential to coping successfully with the missionary situation in all its complexities.

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[14]Soltau, op. cit., p. 100.

Authorities on missions insist on the necessity of the missionary's dependence on the Holy Spirit. Brown writes that it cannot be too often or too strongly emphasized that the missionary must rely heavily upon the Holy Spirit.[15] The missionary needs in his daily life the miraculous spiritual refreshment of the Holy Spirit's ministry. This experience can be a miracle in his heart and life that causes him to possess a joyous confidence and buoyancy of spirit unexplainable from natural causes.[16]

Not only does the missionary need continually the personal ministry of the Spirit in his own life, but he must seek to bring about His miraculous intervention in the lives of others. He looks to the Holy Spirit to produce a spiritual change in men's lives. As C. S. Lewis has succinctly said, "God doesn't want nice people; He wants new men."[17] When Jesus told Nicodemus that man must be born of the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God, He was revealing the fact that the Spirit is the prime necessity in the transaction.

The Holy Spirit helps a man to be more than he naturally is. The exacting demands of the missionary's life call for spiritual resources beyond the endowments of natural man. Paul, the first Christian missionary, acknowledges the source of these resources when he writes, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness,

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[15] Brown, op. cit., p. 63.

[16] Soltau, op. cit., p. 124.

[17] C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1956), p. 167.

goodness, faith, meekness, temperance . . ." (Galatians 5:22). One may be said to be mature in Christian personality to the degree that he possesses these graces.

Self-centeredness is natural to man. William Burnham quotes Sir Arthur Helps as follows, "We are at the center of our own thoughts and at the circumference of other people's."[18] But the missionary call is based on a love and life deeper than this organization around one's own ego. Soltau experienced this truth in his own missionary endeavors,

> Another source of encouragement is in the love engendered by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of both the missionaries and those who have become their spiritual children. It is something which breaks through the barriers of nationality, temperament, language, customs, and culture, which would otherwise seem to be insuperable. Dirt and smells are lost sight of, and a bond of mutual affection and trust is brought into being that cannot be fully understood until it is experienced.[19]

Under the tutorship of the Holy Spirit, one may acquire a spiritual love and concern for others that transcends natural affections. This love is the key that unlocks the doors of human hearts around the world.

Not only does the Holy Spirit add a "plus" factor to our lives, He seeks to purge us of attitudes and habits that hinder. Isolated amid persons and problems that often aggravate, the missionary sometimes finds himself tempted to react in unchristian ways. At times he feels tempted to respond according to the old pattern of former days. In circumstances that would normally provoke unworthy responses, he can remain poised by keeping submissive to the Spirit. Elimination of certain wrong responses

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[18]Burnham, op. cit., p. 37.

[19]Soltau, op. cit., p. 126.

is often a matter of patient learning in the school of the Spirit. As E. Stanley Jones points out, "Maturity is primarily a gift, then it is a growth—so it is a gift and a growth."[20]

But the work of the Spirit in our lives does not stop with adding and subtracting. The Spirit can keep a man from becoming what everyone else is. He helps us retain our individuality. A creature of social relationships and imitative tendencies, the missionary may find it difficult to be himself. He himself may have a misconception of the word "missionary," or he may try slavishly to conform to other people's notions of what makes a missionary. The Holy Spirit can bring a maturity that carries with it the stamp of a man's own individuality. Adolph rightly says, "Each of us has a niche to fill and each of us is enabled to fill that niche by the power of the Spirit of God."[21]

The Holy Spirit alone can make a man what Christ is. For it is to be remembered that "as He is, so are we in this world" (I John 4:17). Christianity is Christ. "This standard," writes Adolph, "is attainable by the inworking of God's Spirit within us and by no other means."[22] Christ is the Mature Man. It is possible to become increasingly like Him only by submitting to the Holy Spirit.[23] To the degree that the personality is open to the work of the Holy Spirit, to that degree it is open to

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[20]E. Stanley Jones, Christian Maturity (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 19.

[21]Paul E. Adolph, Health Shall Spring Forth (Chicago: Moody Press, 1956), p. 100.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Jones, op. cit., p. 22.

a maturity that will make him Christ-like in a myriad of situations.

For that which his home-life failed to do for him, which self-knowledge and self-discipline failed to do for him, the Christian missionary can find compensation in the Holy Spirit.

II. MATURITY MEETING THE NEED

One's maturity is revealed in his relationship to himself, to others, and to life in its total context.

A Healthy Relationship with Oneself

To have a healthy relationship with oneself is basic, for all other relationships are dependent on this. A mature outlook on others and on life in general is hardly possible when one has immature attitudes towards himself.

Socrates' advice about the value of knowing oneself is psychologically sound. Missionary candidate application blanks call for careful, objective self-evaluation. Allport, describing self-objectification, speaks of its two major components, insight and humor.[24] Insight is simply self-knowledge.

The mature person will have a self-knowledge that helps him to understand his basic attitudes and responses. It is essential that he who is considering a missionary career be able to arrive at some decision regarding his own personality in the light of the standards set forth for the successful missionary. He must face realistically the demands of missionary living and try to determine his most likely responses in the

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[24]Allport, op. cit., p. 58.

various situations likely to be met. A careful assessment of his attitudes through prayerful self-inventory should be a part of his decision as to his calling.

Objectivity about oneself is necessary in all areas of one's life. Sound physical health is a basic requirement for service abroad. The prospective missionary must have an appreciable awareness of his own physical strength and limitations in the context of the mission field. He will face this situation realistically and where advisable seek to make necessary adjustments, taking into consideration his physical resources for service and at the same time not forgetting that the body is the temple of God. He will exercise necessary care without undue concern. He will, moreover, maintain a consistent regard for rules of physical safety and sanitation. Not infrequently missionaries have had to return home because of disregard about such things. Cook writes, "Not long ago two missionaries were invalided home from their field, the result of drinking contaminated water because other missionaries had ridiculed them about boiling it ."[25]

The well-balanced person will provide for himself wholesome means of recreation. A healthy body is invaluable to the development of a healthy spirit. Overwork rather than laziness seems to tempt most missionaries. Both alike can cause inefficiency, the former sometimes leads to a breakdown and removal from service.[26] A mature attitude about one's body will see to it that there is neither pampering nor indulgence,

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[25]Cook, op. cit., p. 58.

[26]Dain, op. cit., p. 18.

neither asceticism nor mistreatment.

The right-thinking individual will also seek to objectively assess his talents and abilities. Cole emphasizes the fact when she says, "Part of one's appraisal of himself should certainly be a consideration of his intellectual talents and defects."[27] A careful self-inventory will make it possible for one to find the most useful place of service rather than that most admired or aspired to.

For many prospective missionaries a detached understanding of their emotional nature is perhaps the most difficult to achieve. As Leon Saul writes,

> Although all advances in knowledge meet powerful opposition, it seems that man can face the truths about the physical world, his own body or his own intellectual processes more easily than he can face his own emotional nature.[28]

Yet inasmuch as man's thoughts and actions are likely to be largely influenced by his feelings, it is imperative that he possess understanding of the responses, the caprices of his emotional nature.

Insight into oneself should result in a growing self-acceptance. Realistic self-appraisal will on the one hand save one from tackling tasks beyond his capacity or on the other hand from yielding to unworthy feelings of inferiority. A realistic view of self should release the personality from the need of many defense-mechanisms for self-protection. Instead of using a cluster of these to defend his ego, the mature person can instead organize and channel them in the interests of that Kingdom

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[27]Cole, op. cit., p. 137.

[28]Saul, op. cit., p. 295.

which is to come first in his life.

A healthy relationship with oneself will help a missionary to determine properly the nature of his own ministry. He will not be the mere echo of his parents or his superiors, or of some outmoded concept of "missionary." Institutional missions tend to swallow the personal contact and to make men fall into patterns. To be effective, an individual may require an "against the stream" attitude which may involve misunderstandings with others. Maturity sometimes runs counter to popular opinion. As Overstreet remarks,

> Christ, Roger Bacon, Abraham Lincoln, and many others like them, were all out of adjustment with the going attitudes and practices of their times; but they could hardly be regarded, on that account, as having been immature.[29]

An objective evaluation of self will prepare the missionary to fulfill his calling rather than to be a mere conformist to out-dated or unnecessary patterns. Twentieth century missions call for men and women mature enough to make unique contributions in unique situations. This expendable spirit of adaptation to a unique situation is illustrated by the spirit of the missionaries lately martyred in Ecuador. In their planning to reach the Auca Indians they were not tied to preconceptions of method or technique. Each did his part as he saw fit in the nature of the circumstance, and innovations resulted.[30]

Ernest White senses the Christian's plight as an individual when he says,

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[29]Overstreet, op. cit., p. 73.

[30]Elizabeth Elliot, Through Gates of Splendor (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), pp. 95-105.

> Often there is not enough allowance made for differences in temperament. Some people talk and teach as though all Christians should be cast in the same mould and enjoy the same experiences. Such doctrine is unrealistic. Life is full of variety, and every believer has to work out his own salvation.[31]

To know oneself is a prerequisite to fulfilling the individual ministry for which a man is intended. It is the basis of creativity. Clark, discussing the value of the prophet, says, ". . . it is individuality that supplies the roots of creativity."[32] The mature personality has the insight and courage to be as unique in person and ministry as God created him to be.

This high type of personality will find means of self-expression and self-extension. It is important that the missionary have opportunity for self-expression, for creativity, for doing something he merely likes to do for the sake of sheer enjoyment. From a medical man's viewpoint, Adolph recommends a ". . . scheduled time each week in which no work is scheduled . . . this may well include a hobby."[33] Such personal freedom contributes to physical and mental health, and adds to one's life and ministry. Bishop Hall, speaking on this point, says,

> Every missionary ought to have a hobby. . . . To have a hobby shows both energy and leisureliness of mind. It shows the energy that has always room for new interest. It shows also that essential leisureliness which will always find time for people because it does not see its life work as a moving staircase on which one dare not stop.[34]

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[31]Ernest White, Christian Life and the Unconscious (New York: Harper, 1956), p. 165.

[32]Walter H. Clark, The Psychology of Religion (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1958), p. 296.

[33]Adolph, op. cit., p. 95.

[34]Hall, op. cit., p. 46.

Hall not only found personal pleasure in his hobby of raising pigs but found this avocation actually brought him closer "than all the talking in the world" to the life of his neighbors.[35] He cites examples of busy missionaries who have added hobbies to their lives: Morrison made a hobby of language, Carey liked gardening, Temple Gairdner loved music and drama, and Livingston expressed his personal interests in his great pioneer feats.[36] The mature personality will allot some time to an activity demanding creativity.

A sense of humor is often indicative of personality maturation. It is almost indispensable in the life of the missionary. In their literature, mission boards call attention to the significance of humor in the missionary personality. Allport, commenting on the role played by humor, states,

> True humor has been defined by the novelist Meredith as the ability to laugh at the things one loves (including oneself and all that pertains to oneself), and still love them. The real humorist perceives behind some solemn event, himself for instance, the contrast between pretension and performance.[37]

Since a child cannot see himself objectively his sense of humor must be stimulated by something outside of himself. But in adulthood a healthy relationship to oneself will not infrequently provoke humor. Soltau, insisting on the need of humor in missionaries, points to its value as a safety valve that releases the pressures and tensions of

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[35] Ibid., p. 48.

[36] Ibid., p. 46.

[37] Allport, op. cit., p. 223.

missionary life.[38] Nowhere perhaps is the sense of humor more helpful in relieving tensions than in a classroom situation on the mission field. As Burnham points out, humor is especially needed at times to help bring about the right classroom atmosphere.[39]

Humor helps the missionary to see himself as he must appear in the eyes of the people whom he has come to serve. When both the missionary and the national can laugh over their mutual national idiosyncrasies, they have at least one common ground of understanding.

An example of how a sense of humor came to the relief of one missionary is recorded in Missionary Mama,

> The first two times the Jeep choked a little on the flood and the mud, but it went right through. The third time, the river was wider, and I had no idea how deep it was. I put the gears into low-four-wheel-drive, and eased down into the water carefully. I had great hopes we'd go right on through, but in the middle of the stream the motor coughed and gurgled and gave up its spark of life. I tried the best I could to start it, but in vain. The two Indian men were mumbling under their breath, the water was lapping the floor boards, the river was rushing, and there was pregnant Mama, with two Indian men, stuck in the river, in the middle of nowhere, with a heavy trailer load of tin roofing sheets on behind. What to do? What could I do? Showing my usual amount of unusual intelligence, I simply sat there and laughed. That was about the funniest situation I'd found myself in since I was roasting over the flames in a Cairo train. Then I thought of an old song you used to sing, Mom, 'Keep sweet, keep sweet, that's the only way . . .' so I sang that for awhile. The Indian men cheered up a little when they saw me so happy to be in such a place, so we all three sang an Indian bhanjana (song), and then we prayed and asked the Lord to help us get out of that river.[40]

The sense of humor saved from frustration and channeled energy toward getting the Jeep out of the river.

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[38] Soltau, op. cit., p. 132.

[39] Burnham, op. cit., p. 211.

[40] Ruth Seamands, Missionary Mama (New York: Greenwich Book Publishers, 1957), p. 62.

A sense of humor resulting from self-objectification is then of major importance in the make-up of the prospective missionary. The utter seriousness of being surrounded by a hostile spiritual environment, engaged in a life-and-death struggle of eternal significance puts demands on a personality that only a vital sense of humor can keep in balance.

A healthy relationship with oneself recognizes, moreover, the need of frank acknowledgment of one's failures and sins. No one is ready to move toward missionary soil who himself has not faced squarely whatever moral and spiritual blemishes may be present in his own life. He will see to it that he himself has been soundly "born again," that he himself is in possession of inner spiritual resources that he can draw upon in times of trial and temptation. He will have learned the folly of trusting in his own strength, his own wisdom.

A Healthy Relationship to Others

A healthy relationship to oneself will have a direct bearing on a person's relation to others. One measuring rod of maturity consists in seeing how far one has moved beyond his childish ego-centricity. Psychologists, psychiatrists, medical doctors, and ministers urge people to explore interests beyond themselves for the sake of mental and spiritual health. Jones speaks of this need as follows,

> It will probably astonish many, therefore, when I say that the great problem in every well-conducted sanitarium is how to get the patients to do anything! Especially for others, for they are not interested in others; they are solely interested in themselves—that's why they are there.[41]

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[41]Jones, op. cit., p. 24.

The healthy-minded, mature person seeks to extend himself. He is interested in work and play, and especially in people. His interest and conversation will not be so "biologically" bound.[42] This kind of extension of self is another requirement of missionary success.

It is almost trite to say that the missionary's whole life is geared to other people. The taking of the Good News to others, with all its concomitant blessings, is the only excuse for missions. As Ronald Hall says,

> Being a missionary is like being married. Your happiness and joy is in other persons' lives. The interest and excitement of sharing the lives of others is infinitely more than the cost of exile from your own country and from your folks.[43]

The same writer points out that a missionary's job is not "professional;" its end is ". . . the joy of God and the joy of man."[44] An attitude about others such as this goes into the making of a strong missionary, contributing much to the satisfaction of the missionary life. It can only make him the more resourceful during those times when harsh demands beset him, when he seems to belong to everyone but himself.

It is love, however, that is the most distinguishing mark of the mature missionary. Love must be the springboard and the vehicle of his relationships with others. It is love that makes the interests of another vital to oneself. What one loves becomes and remains a vital part of him.[45]

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[42]Allport, op. cit., p. 218.

[43]Hall, op. cit., p. 7.

[44]Ibid., p. 40.

[45]Allport, op. cit., p. 217.

Yet, he who loves finds in the extension of self a reciprocal relationship; that love that extends itself adds to itself.

The identifying of self with others through love is a major goal of missions. To break through into the life of the people is the job of the missionary.[46] Love enables identification to become an unconscious principle rather than a conscious effort. Soltau, speaking of identifying oneself through love, puts the matter thus,

> A successful missionary is a man, who, by the grace of the Lord, is able to pour his life and personality into others, so that he is reduplicating himself in them and preparing them to go forth and repeat the process in the lives of their fellow countrymen.[47]

The mature missionary personality seeks to be increasingly sensitive to the needs of others. That type of personality that shows more concern for self than for others can expect to meet only with frustration and defeat on the mission field. Such a one will likely prove to be a real hindrance to the Lord's work. Not only will his associates discern his selfishness, but the people to whom he seeks to minister will sooner or later recognize his weakness. A veteran missionary has said that self-consciousness is as dangerous as self-importance.[48]

A healthy relation with others is one that adjusts to people as they are. Just as the mature person will have the insight and courage to maintain his own individuality so he will respect the individuality of others. To quote Joshua Liebman,

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[46]Hall, op. cit., p. 53.

[47]Soltau, op. cit., p. 132.

[48]Hall, op. cit., p. 46.

> A love of neighbor manifests itself in a tolerance not only of the opinions of others, but, what is more important, of the essence and uniqueness of others, when we subscribe to that religious philosophy of life which insists that God has made man and woman an individual sacred personality endowed with a specific temperament, created with differing needs, hunger, dreams.[49]

Mature Christian love will help the missionary to avoid the pitfalls of that kind of "perfectionism" that causes one to strive to attain to the impossible. Such "perfectionism" frequently produces not only frustration but a negative critical spirit. Cook states that a critical spirit is the greatest danger in missionary relationships.[50] Burnham says it is a common characteristic of teachers.[51] Maturity never demands the impossible of others. Instead, it paves the way for harmonious relations based on appreciation and consideration.[52] The missionary educator will be more likely to do effective work, and be happy in doing it, when he is not goaded by unrealistic goals either for himself or others.

A healthy avoidance of "perfectionist" type of conduct will save the missionary from doing for the national what the national could do for himself. By the same token, it will keep the missionary teacher from over-helping his students to the place where wholesome development is inhibited.[53] Deprivation of opportunity to make mistakes means

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[49]Liebman, op. cit., p. 74.

[50]Cook, op. cit., p. 124.

[51]Burnham, op. cit., p. 422.

[52]Adolph, op. cit., p. 53.

[53]Burnham, op. cit., p. 417.

deprivation in growth. This fact is important to the development of an indigenous church. For nationals must be allowed to take responsibilities, mistakes or no mistakes. Soltau has this to say on the matter,

> The temptation to do too much for the national must be conquered; for, in doing too much for them, the missionary is defeating his own purpose by actually creating, not true Christians, dependent upon God for their salvation and needs, but nominal Christians who, finding the missionary and the church a source of easy livelihood, become Christians simply for the material gain.[54]

A healthy attitude toward others helps them to help themselves. A major thesis in Burnham's book dealing with the wholesome personality is that everyone should have a challenging, worthwhile task to do.[55] That love that is according to knowledge will see to it that others meet life's problems, at first at least, with their own assortment of trial and error solutions.

The personality finds its relationships to self and others to be healthy when it sees things in a Christian perspective. The basic trouble-making attitudes of superiority and inferiority decrease as understanding, appreciation, and appropriation of the Christian concept of life increase. For the missionary, seeking first the kingdom of God will do more than any other one thing to insure balance in general outlook. For when a man loves God with all his heart, he cannot but love his neighbor as himself.

A Healthy Relationship with Life in its Total Context

Human personality is more than a collection of personal

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[54]Soltau, op. cit., p. 69.

[55]Burnham, op. cit., p. 357.

characteristics. It is an entity in itself. All the factors of human personality are interdependent, forming a totality. This basic unity or wholeness of a life that is lived out in twenty-four-hour fragments expresses itself through a healthy relationship with life in its total context.

To Allport a main mark of maturity is the possession of a unifying philosophy of life; he sees religion, searching for the underlying value, as the most comprehensive philosophy possible.[56] To the Christian this unifying philosophy is his realization of the total context of life. Not only time but eternity is involved in the plan of God.

For the Christian, life has basic meaning and purpose. He sees God's plan as an eternal one. This fact gives significance and relevance to the events of time. The seeming injustices and mysteries of history fit together in the total plan of a sovereign Creator-God. The nagging problems of the revolutionary character of our times, of the increasing ascendency of evil, and for the missionary, of the closing of many doors of missionary activity, can only be understood in the light of the total context of God's plan.

Especially does the Christian philosophy of life contribute to maturity when it is expressed in the immediate realities of the present environment. Although the mature-thinking adult will occasionally grapple with world and cosmic problems, most of his time is involved with problems related to his immediate situation. The otherwise monotonous hours can have meaning because he knows they are not without meaning in the total

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[56]Allport, op. cit., p. 226.

context of life. As Louella Cole has said, "An adult is well adjusted to his work if he is sufficiently interested in the ends he has in view to take monotony in his stride."[57] The long days of suffering or discouragement and seeming defeat can be endured because of a mature view of life that appreciates God's eternal design. The trial can become a trail toward the ultimate goal for the one who puts God's kingdom first. Unexpected and undesired changes can be adjusted to with comparative ease if they are assimilated into the total concept. Hall insists that the missionary must care a great deal and yet not at all about his work; for, "Everything you do is terribly important because the souls of men are at stake. And yet everything you do is unimportant because the souls of men are in God's hands and not in yours."[58]

A healthy relationship with life will be essentially a healthy relationship with God through Christ. Faith in God's plan through Christ will be an integrating factor. Lives integrate around a center. This could be an immature ego-centered integration. However, the life of the mature servant of God will be integrated around the indwelling person of Christ. Out of the heart are the issues of life (Proverbs 4:23), and out of the integrated inner life will come consistent behavior patterns. Life will be a joy to such a person. As Overstreet comments, "The characteristic of the mature person is that he affirms life. To affirm life he must be involved heart and soul in the process of living."[59]

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[57]Cole, op. cit., p. 68.

[58]Hall, op. cit., p. 62.

[59]Overstreet, op. cit., p. 35.

A healthy attitude toward life in general will be purposeful. The individual is moving toward a goal that gives meaning and purpose to both great and small tasks. Gordon Allport sees in this purposeful living a chief characteristic of the mature personality. In such a life, he says, "Evaluations are sure; actions are precise, and the goals of the individual life are well-defined."[60]

Keeping his Christian concept of life always in perspective, the missionary will see to it that his methods are servants of his ultimate aim. It is possible for original motives to become lost and for means to the end to become the ends in themselves.[61] Especially in the area of educational missions will the maturity of purpose that controls means and methods serve to keep the original goal intact.

The mature personality, with a healthy relationship to himself, to others, and to life in its total context, finds that in spite of what may be an extremely difficult external environment, his life is one of genuine satisfaction because it runs with the true grain of life as God has designed it. He finds himself a useful and happy servant of the missionary cause to which he is committed.

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[60] Allport, op. cit., p. 190.

[61] Ibid., p. 206.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Nowhere is the need for maturation of the whole man more imperative than in the life of the Christian missionary. The fruit of a mature Christian life is after all the most convincing argument of the Christian witness. Conversely, the immature personality may well undo the good work others have done in the name of Christ.

Missionary life compounds the strains of adjustments common to normal living at home. The familiar comforts of home are replaced by new and strange things that can bring mental and emotional strains as well as physical hardships. Demands on the missionary's time, privacy, and possessions require a surrender of personal rights. The problems in the formation of an indigenous church demand a maturity of personality that can lead, share, or follow national leadership as the case may demand. With growing nations becoming increasingly independent, self-conscious, and often anti-white, additional stresses are added to missionary life. Unstable internal and international conditions, bringing greater uncertainty and insecurity in present-day missionary work, can be coped with only by mature Christian personalities.

In addition to the general adjustments a missionary must make, the educational missionary faces adjustments peculiar to his profession. He must be prepared to meet greater educational needs with few resources. There is always the temptation to make education an end in itself, forgetting the primary goal of winning men to Christ. The mature Christian

personality is basic to the missionary whose work must be educationally sound and truly Christian.

Missionary boards face a difficult task in selecting adequate personnel. Mistakes here can take heavy toll in men and money. Boards dealing with candidates must resort to every available means of determining personality maturity. Questionnaires and information blanks, tests, interviews, and training programs are widely used.

Broadly speaking, the marks of the mature personality are healthy relationships with self, with others, and with life in its total context. Of the many factors contributing to these ends, one of the most significant is the home background. Another is the influence of the Holy Spirit in one's life. Although the home places a determinative stamp on the developing personality, the work of the Holy Spirit in the life is essential to continuing maturation.

The mature personality, with its better-than-average insight into human nature, is a pre-requisite for fruitful missionary service. The mission field, on the other hand, offers an almost unparalleled opportunity for the expression of the mature Christian life.

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